
WHAT IS FUSRAP?

During the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s, work was performed at sites throughout the United States as part of the nation's early atomic energy program. Some sites' activities can be traced back as far as World War II and the Manhattan Engineer District (MED); other sites were involved in peacetime activities under the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC). Both MED and AEC were predecessors of DOE.

Most sites that became contaminated during the early atomic energy program were cleaned up under the guidelines in effect at the time. Because in most cases those cleanup guidelines were not as strict as today's, trace amounts of radioactive materials remained at some of the sites. Over the years, contamination was spread to other locations, either by demolition of buildings, intentional movement of materials, or by natural processes.

DOE began FUSRAP in 1974 to study these sites and take appropriate cleanup action. When a site is thought to be contaminated, old records are reviewed and the site is surveyed. If contamination is found that is connected to MED or AEC activities, cleanup is authorized under FUSRAP. Some sites with industrial contamination similar to that produced by MED or AEC activities have also been added to FUSRAP by Congress. The Energy and Water Development Appropriations Act for fiscal year 1998 (FY98) P.L. 105-62, signed into law on October 13, 1997, transferred responsibility for the administration and execution of the FUSRAP from the U.S. Department of Energy to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The contaminants are primarily low levels of uranium, thorium, and radium, with their associated decay products. Mixed wastes are also present. DOE had identified 46 sites in their program. None of these sites pose an immediate threat to human health or the environment. At the time of enactment of P.L. 105-62, according to DOE, remediation was completed at 24 sites with some ongoing operation maintenance and monitoring being undertaken by DOE. Remedial action was planned, underway or pending final closeout at the remaining 22 sites.

HOW HAZARDOUS ARE FUSRAP SITES?

Even though FUSRAP sites may contain levels of radioactivity above current regulatory guidelines, none of the sites poses an immediate health risk to the public or environment given current land uses. The contaminated materials have very low concentrations, and people are not exposed to them for long periods of time.

Although these materials are not a hazard, they will remain radioactive for thousands of years, and health risks could increase if the use of the land were to change. Under FUSRAP, each site is cleaned to levels acceptable for most, if not all, future uses for the land, such as residential development, crop production, and the installation of drinking water wells.

WHAT ARE FUSRAP'S OBJECTIVES?

The objectives of FUSRAP are to:

- Find and evaluate sites that supported MED/AEC nuclear work and determine whether they need cleanup and/or control.
- Clean up or maintain these sites so that they meet current DOE guidelines.
- Dispose of or stabilize contamination in a way that is safe for the public and the environment.
- Perform all work in compliance with appropriate federal laws and regulations, and comply with state and local environmental laws and land-use requirements.
- Certify the sites for appropriate future use.

HOW DOES FUSRAP WORK?

Larger FUSRAP sites undergo several steps that lead to cleanup. First, information about the site is collected and reviewed. Then, a remedial investigation/feasibility study is conducted. The remedial investigation is made to identify the type and location of the contamination. The feasibility study develops and evaluates cleanup alternatives.

Throughout the remedial investigation/feasibility study process, the public is informed about the progress toward a decision on the cleanup alternative.

When a cleanup alternative is chosen, a proposed plan is written to explain why it was chosen. Members of the public are asked to comment on all the cleanup options, including the selected alternative. After public comments are considered, a final decision is made and documented in a record of decision. The remedial design follows the record of decision and includes technical drawings and specifications that show how the cleanup will be conducted.

Cleanup begins after the remedial design is complete. This phase involves site preparation and construction activities. When these activities are completed, verification surveys are conducted to ensure that cleanup objectives for the site have been met.

Smaller FUSRAP sites undergo a somewhat different review and documentation process. Taking the place of a remedial investigation/feasibility study and proposed plan, are:

1. A site radiological characterization, a more detailed version of the preliminary radiological assessment;
2. an engineering evaluation/cost analysis (EE/CA), which lists the range of cleanup options available and identifies the DOE's preferred option; and
3. an action memorandum, authorizing a cleanup to proceed.

The public has the opportunity to review and comment on the site EE/CC.

Under special circumstances, a site cleanup may proceed without the issuance of an EE/CA -- proceeding directly from characterization to cleanup.

HOW IS FUSRAP ORGANIZED?

U.S. Army Corps of Engineer geographic divisions and districts are responsible for FUSRAP project execution supported by HTRW Design Districts and the HTRW Center of Expertise. USACE contract strategy will concentrate on individual site-specific remediation contracts. USACE expects more efficient remedial actions through the use of performance-based specifications using fixed-price and cost-type contracts, as appropriate.

HOW CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?

In performing FUSRAP work, USACE implements community outreach programs to keep the public informed. USACE's public information efforts include fact sheets, public meetings, and contacts with media, citizens groups, and public officials.